

Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of 2002 Biennial Regulatory Review -  
Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules  
and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202  
of the Telecommunications Act of 1996,  
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking,  
MM Docket No. 02-277, (rel. Sept. 23, 2002)

To: The Secretary, FCC Commissioners, and Chief, Media Bureau

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In its goals to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate the negative affects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity. While there may be indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented have become more limited.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition, I support the FCC's plan to hold a public hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA in February 2003. I strongly encourage the Commission to hold similar hearings in all parts of the country and solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Morgan Sharpe

P.S. I am presently visiting my elderly parents who live in a media market approximately the same size as that of my home town. Here, however, on the

radio there is about one twentieth the coverage of public affairs I am used to, and infinitesimally less diversity of sources of information and opinion. Entertainment rules. With one widely circulated newspaper versus the three that I am used to, the situation is somewhat better in terms of print media....but still: It's a virtual monopoly; people have one third the chance to hear countervailing views. Public awareness of - and interest in - local, national, and international issues is correspondingly impoverished.

I fear that if the rule changes currently being considered are enacted the potential intelligence and wisdom of the American people will have been similarly reduced for no good reason.